

# critical digest



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Jul 31, 1961 Vol XIII No 19 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter Digest Service-Published 52 weeks a year- \$25 per year

## This Week in NYC

Off Broadway and Broadway current shows made ready for fall tours. Two downtown long run hits and four uptown presentations will be added to the ten Broadway productions now touring. Three Penny Opera will close in a few weeks after a six year run and open its cross-country tour at Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto Sept 11, while Hedda Gabler with Anne Meacham will begin a scheduled tour of eight weeks, in Dayton, Ohio Oct 19. Broadway companies of Bye Bye Birdie, Irma La Douce, The Unsinkable Molly Brown and A Taste of Honey will also open tours in the fall.

## Plays

All the Way Home posted closing notice and may close this week or next unless business improves... Barnum! musical due in Dec to be staged by Gene Frankel... A Family Affair a new musical comedy by John Kander, William & James Goldman to be presented Feb 8 by Andrew Siff, directed by Word Baker... The Human Pattern a new comedy-drama by Irving Cooper to be presented in Oct by Richard Krakeur-David Kaufman, starring Thelma Ritter... Defender of the Lost a new play about Clarence Darrow by Morris Ebenstein to be presented in the fall by Roger L. Stevens... Blood and Thunder a new musical based on the forthcoming biography about theatre producer Charles Taylor by Dwight Taylor to be presented in fall 1962 by Richard Halliday, starring Mary Martin.

## Players

Joan Potter subbed for vacationing Kim Stanley, A Far Country... Julius La Rosa to make NY stage debut subbing for vacationing Hal March, Come Blow Your Horn, for two weeks starting Aug 10... Martha Wright to replace Mary Martin, Sound of Music, in Oct... Ruth Kobart, NY City Opera, and Claudette Sutherland, Yale Drama graduate, both to debut in How to Succeed.

## NYC Calendar

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Wollman Rink, Central Park 7/31. NY Shakespeare Festival presents second free production of season directed by Joel Friedman with Kathleen Widdoes, Anne Fielding, Margaret Hall, James Earl Jones.

## Broadway Business

Variety reports further decreases in most shows with sell-outs only at-- Carnival, Mary Mary and Sound of Music... Fiorello! which had cut ticket prices added to "twofer" shows... Carnival investors fully repaid after 15 weeks.

## Special Events

"What's Right and What's Wrong in the Theatre" will be discussed at a free public lecture by Dore Schary Aug 2 at Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. at 2 PM

## Theatre TV Notes

Macbeth with Judith Anderson and Maurice Evans to be repeated Oct 20 on NBC TV Hall of Fame.

## Theatre Record Notes

Olivier London musical hit with new cast members Stanley Holloway and Alma Cogan to be recorded by HMV Records. Original cast album is by Decca.

## Theatre Ad Notes

Red Eye of Love display ad in Times features portrait of Michael Vale in full mustache and the headline "Not This is not Broadway's most prolific producer. This is O. O. Martin—owner of the world's largest meat department store."

## Off Broadway

King of the Dark Chambers closed after 183 performances... No Law Against Love a new book musical in revue form to be produced and directed by Vassili Lambrinos Sept 27 at York, featuring Jorie Remus... Warren Finnerty to be featured in Ghosts... The Medicine Girl, new title of 1920 musical "Good Morning Bill" by P. G. Wodehouse to be revived in oct by David Jasen-Wallace Hill... The Sap of Life a new musical with book and lyrics by Richard Malthby, Jr and music by David Shire to be presented Oct 2 at One Sheridan Sq by Mary Jean Parsons and Lewis Lloyd.

Writers Stage Company formed by Doris Belack, Michael Kahn, Gordon Rogoff, Judith Ruth-erford, Ed Wittstein to present a season of new plays at a theatre to be selected. Plays include-- The Love Nest by Deric Washburn, Five in the Afternoon by Elizabeth Blake and Royal Court a new musical by Charles Weiss-Sy Salkowitz. Group is raising \$100,000 to present a full Off Broadway season.

## Theatre Book Notes

"Five Plays by John O'Hara" to be published by Random House... "Actors Talk About Acting" fourteen interviews by Lewis Funke, Times, and John Booth, 20th Century Fund, to be published in Oct by Random House... "Digests of Great American Plays" outlines of 100 dramas edited by John Lovell, Jr, Howard Univ, to be published by Lippincott.

## Legal Dept

League of NY Theatres reports some progress in contract talks with stagehands, but an impasse with playwrights on details of royalty cut offer.

## Play Diary

The Canvas Barricade - Stratford, Ont 8/7... The Moon Is Blue - 41 St 8/8.

## DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

**Troilus and Cressida**- Stratford, Conn 7/23. 5 pro Times, Herald Tribune, News, Post, Journal American-and 1 con- World Telegram & Sun-filed on third repertory production of American Shakespeare Festival & Academy season, staged in Civil War dress by Jack Landau with Ted van Griethuysen, Carrie Nye, Donald Harron, Donald Davis. Affirmative voters were generally mild with most okaying use of US Civil War costumes as an aid to clarifying the Greek and Trojan generals. They expressed a wide difference of opinion on the title players, and the modern significance of the seldom seen late Shakespeare drama. Sole dissenter panned conception. Pro side headed by Taubman, Times, who okayed all but final 15 minute battle scene. Though the costume theme does not carry too well, it does give fresh insight, the direction, Times man found had a disaffecting tendency to settle for the surface communication of an idea. As for the play Taubman found it modern, stimulating and searching. Crist, Herald Tribune, billed it as an oddly distracting production, the play as elusive as ever. Herald Tribune Arts Editor noted that it served to bring Carrie Nye, Paul Sparer, James Ray to prominence in company. Watts, Post, cheered play, players and production; an absorbing document of human frailties that is being performed with enough passion and meaning to make a trip to Stratford essential to any theatre devotee. Herridge, Post, applauded it as the most satisfying work of the season by the group, a rare chance to see a play rarely done. Kastendieck, Journal American, okayed it for the production, rather than the play or players. He feared the leads spoke too self-consciously in a play that the elements of sex and politics do not blend equally. Con voter Morello, WTS, panned proceedings as more Tennessee Williams, Margaret Mitchell or Bruce Catton than Shakespeare or Homer. The final battle scene was more horse opera, while the cast throughout the entire play tried valiantly to rise above the encumbrance of costuming that seemed inappropriate.

**The Little Hut**-41st St (125 W 41)- 7/25. 1 pro-Mirror- and 6 con- Times, Herald Tribune, News, Post, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- filed on third two week run of Barbara Griner-Eleanor Horn "All Star Summer Festival" season directed by Matt Cimber with Denise Darcel, Edward Crowley, Ronald Durling. Revival of 1953 Andre Roussin comedy was panned by majority as under-rehearsed and poorly done. Single pro vote from Altshuler, Mirror, enjoyed effective, though not brilliant, acting in a production that takes your mind off the heat. But not another critic agreed. Many of the pans did not mention cast at all. Esterow, Times, concluded it was not the heat, it was the incredibility of how the comedy hit of London and Paris could be so dull. Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, added that in fairness to the cast which did not have enough rehearsal time the curtain should have never been raised on this professional calamity. Silver, News, also felt cast was not ready, and if it was the direction was plodding, ineffectual. Herridge, Post, doesn't see how it was possible to assemble a cast even worse than the group's Susan Slept Here which opened with the most liberal display of fluffs a premiere has ever seen. O'Connor, Journal American, noted that though Darcel has been in the US for 14 years her French accent made it difficult to know what she was talking about in the little comedy that kept getting littlier. Saffron, WTS, added up all the elements that went to create total doom, warning that at \$4.90 top it can't be shrugged off as summer stock.

**Carousel**- San Juan- 7/20. 4 NYC critics praised opening musical production of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Drama Festival presented at 2900 seat theatre on campus of Univ of Puerto Rico. Produced by Barry Yellen, directed by John O'Shaughnessy cast was headed by Carole Maye, Betty Oakes, Bill Walker, Helen Blount, Scott Merrill, Chapman, News, raved over admirable cast, professional direction in revival of Rodgers & Hammerstein classic that will remain freshest longest because it exists more in spirit than in time. Coleman, Mirror, enjoyed show with excellent cast, both vocally and histrionically. Herridge, Post, reported that if current cast did not match the original, they are close enough to recapture the poignancy and lyricism of the story and the full tenderness of the music. Cleaves, World Telegram & Sun, also applauded professional production, the first musical ever presented on the island. Succeeding bills include--Guys and Dolls, Oklahoma, and West Side Story.

**Prickly Pair**-Showplace- 7/21. 1 pro- Herridge, Post- filed on new two player revue with current title player of "Little Mary Sunshine" Marian Mercer and R.G. Brown. Material alternating between songs and sketches is hep and amusing... Take 3 Cafe (149 Bleecker) double bill of new scripts vetoed by Post's busy theatre editor. Chalk Marks on a Brick Wall by Gregory Rosakis and a one-man skit with and by Dalene Young were both marked unconvincing, overacted and underdeveloped.



INTER-  
VIEW  
HI-LITES

MICHAEL ELLIS, Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Penn, will take summer theatre any day over Broadway production, he told Viner, World Telegram & Sun. His aim is to enjoy theatre, Broadway has more headaches and less satisfaction than summer stock. Summer theatre is fun because it is informal and you can afford to be experimental. Admitting his summer theatre is a means to a Broadway end, Ellis does not want to produce exclusively on Broadway. A successful Broadway producer has to be an unpopular, hated S.O.B.



NYC  
FUTURE  
CALENDAR

Pirates of Penzance Phoenix 9/6... Ghosts-4th St 9/20... Julius Castro- 9/21... High Fidelity- Ambassador- 9/25... From the Second City- Royale 9/26... 4th Av North- Mad Av 9/27... No Law Against Love- York 9/27... Diff'rent- Actor Play 9/28... Purlie Victorious- Cort 9/29.

O Marry Me-Gate 10/2... Sap of Life- 1 Sher Sq- 10/2... Sail Away- Broadhurst 10/3... The Caretaker - Lyceum 10/4... Blood, Sweat and Stanley Poole- Morosco- 10/5... Clandestine on the Morning Line 10/5... Let's Ride It- O'Neill 10/6... 9 O Clock Theatre- Golden 10/8... Milk & Honey- Beck- 10/10... How to Succeed- 46th St 10/14... All in Love- 41st St 10/16... Cook for Mr General-Playhouse 10/19... Kwamina-54th St- 10/23... The Buskers- Cricket- 10/25... When No One is Looking- Belasco- 10/26... Gayden- Maidman 10/30... Go Fight City Hall- Mayfair 10/30



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

NYC CRITICS ABROAD...King Kong South African musical with native cast now in London mildly approved by Watts, Post. When it is dancing and laughing, when it is all zestful movement, it is a pleasure to see, but trouble sets in with the book told in stencils, and unaided by the towering performance required in the title role. Tod Matshikiza's score Post critic rated as fresh, pleasant, lively, though not distinguished. ...The Bird of Time by Peter Mayne with Gladys Cooper and Diana Wynyard picked by Cameron, News, as London's most enticing new play that could with profit be brought to NYC. Best stage production viewed by News film reviewer was The Merchant of Venice.

COLUMN TIPS...Ginger Rogers will star in re-opening of Wildcat in NYC, notes Parsons, Journal American ...Gideon has \$500,000 advance sales, lists Coleman, Mirror...Tisch Realty will buy theatre area on 45th & 46th St which includes-Morosco, Bijou Hayes, Victoria, Astor- and build a new skyscraper with five new theatres, leaving two standing, hears Davis, News...NBC TV announcer Hugh Downs to get \$10,000 for his theatre debut in Under the Yum Yum Tree at Warren, Ohio, records Lyons, Post

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Though Broadway may be suffering, this is the perfect chance to see the shows you thought were impossible to get into, advises Cleaves, World Telegram & Sun...Summer theatres inspite of the encroachments of the star packages has through the years helped keep alive interest in the stage, provided desperately needed substitute for the old stock companies in training actors, and given employment and a chance to be seen to experienced players, sums Taubman, Times.

DRAMA MAIL BAG...\$5 orchestra seats for Fiorello! praised by Herald Tribune reader who hopes this starts a trend toward more reasonable prices ... Favorite Yiddish actors filed by readers of Coleman, Mirror, following article on Yiddish theatres on Second Ave in the 1920's include---Aaron Lebedeff, Jacob P Adler, Madame Bertha Kalich, Clara Joel.

COULD BE PREDICTIONS?...If previous seasons are any criterion, the new season may go something like this, safely predicts Peper, World Telegram & Sun---A musical version of Little Caesar starring a rock'n roll singer will be announced but not done ...Someone may do a straight dramatic version of Gold Diggers of 1935 Off Broadway...A new group will announce an extensive season of repertory in a converted brokerage office in the Wall St area with performances at noontime...Elizabeth Taylor will be announced to star in the movie version of Becket

THEATRE HELPS BUSINESS...The 55 retailers in Bergen Mall, Paramus, NJ, shopping center who put up \$75,000 to present a summer season of Playhouse on the Mall, Robert Ludlum director, prove a natural wedding of the theatre and the market place, reports Kirk, Herald Tribune. An increase in store traffic and a boost in sales is already apparent, retailers reported. In addition the backers expect to make a direct profit on their investments as the shows have been doing well.

Troilus and Cressida at Stratford, Conn, is a vastly uneven Civil War rendition of the seldom seen drama that retains its interest through a score of outstandingly brilliant portrayals by the younger male cast members, and with slight help from either the title players or the older cast members. Donald Davis, Donald Harron, Paul Sparer, Thayer David and others presented vividly cut characters in the difficult play. But the title players seem both miscast and bored, inspite of the concluding cannon-fire. As this play once went 300 years without being produced, it is the duty of every theatre fan to add the production to his experience.

The Little Hut revival is presented without a semblance of humor, wit, and/or professionalism. The cast did not improve its collective memory, and not one actually knew his part. Even if they did the French accent of the leading lady would have made the script incomprehensible to its author. The stage business provided by the director never could work as the prop man was on a par with the actors. The 41st St "All Star Comedy Festival" has certainly reached bottom after providing a brilliant revival of The Voice of the Turtle and a poor rendition of a bad play, Susan Slept Here. The location is ideal, the price is moderate, the air-conditioning (when it is on) is fine. All that is needed are some talented actors and a director.

Maybe it was the hot weather, but something seems very unfair in the news released by the League of New York Theatres on the current state of two sets of negotiations. A settlement is expected with the stagehands union who have requested wage increases and paid vacations and pension fund increases. No progress is reported with the playwrights who voluntarily have agreed to a cut in royalties.

Theatre researchers should put away their charts which prove that the average NY theatre ticket buyer is age 53, lives in Westchester and goes to 2 1/2 shows per season. A visit to Times Square on a hot July Sunday before noon is called for. Standing in the blistering sun waiting for the doors to open is a crowd forming a line a half block long at Radio City to see "Fanny". At the Paramount Theatre a shorter line is also standing in the sun to see "The Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea." Even about to be opened gift shops have lines waiting before noon. It is obvious that somebody is left in NYC in summer time, and that all these somebodies have money to spend on entertainment. It is to the shame of the entire theatre industry that no one has ever bothered to find a way to entice customers to legit theatre in summer time. It is more the pity now that all of the Broadway houses are comfortably air-conditioned. Even the efficient Off Broadway cooling systems can be kept in operation during the plays if the audience outvotes the actors on this subject.





OUTER  
BROADWAY  
THEATRE  
LETTER

College Theatre

UCLA Theatre Group, Los Angeles, presenting The Iceman Cometh with Eddie Albert for three weeks starting Aug 25 ... The Barrier musical drama by Langston Hughes- Jan Meyerowitz revived for a single free performance at Eisner & Lubin Auditorium, New York Univ, Washington Square.

AETA

Exhibition of photos, set designs and programs of 300 college, school and community theatre productions to be displayed at NY Public Library, Fifth Av & 42nd St from Jul 27-Sept 30 in conjunction with AETA convention Aug 24-30 at Waldorf Astoria, NYC.

Community Theatre

Midland Community Theatre Center, Texas appointed C. A. Jennings director of Children's Theatre.

Summer Playhouses

Paradise Island cancelled Tues performance at Jones Beach, NY after brief thunder shower kept lights dark from 8 15 to 10 20 PM ... Showcase Productions open season at Store Theatre, Los Angeles with Home of the Brave, Aug 12 Frank Carpenter-David Ridenour co-producers... Ionesco's The New Tenant and The Bald Soprano to be produced and directed by Dean Stockwell at Coronet Theatre, Los Angeles.

Shakespeare

Stratford, Conn, Festival to construct a Memorial Gallery in 1964 honoring 400th anniversary of the birth of the Bard. New building will serve as a museum and also would provide rehearsal rooms and a lecture hall. A lecture series by Shakespeare scholars is also part of the program planned for 1964.

Road Tours

Advise and Consent tour will star Wendell Corey in leading role starting Oct 3 in Cincinnati.

Tryouts This Week

Drums in the Night-a new play by Bertold Brecht at Arena Theatre, Albany, NY 8/2-5.

Striped Sack for Penny Candy by Max Hodge at Starlight Theatre, Pawling, NY 8/1-6.

Anatol-new musical adaptation by Tom Jones, music by Offenback with Jean Pierre Aumont, Marisa Pavan at Arts Center Theatre, Boston, Mass 7/31-8/19.

Unusual Revivals This Week

Captain's Paradise- Red Barn Theatre, Northport, NY With Hilda Simms 8/1-8/27

The Lady from the Sea- Princeton, NJ Players 8/1-5

Born Yesterday- Lake Luzerne, NY, Playhouse 8/1-6

Camino Real- Phoenix, AZ, Playhouse 8/1-6

The Admirable Crichton- Woodstock, NY, Playhouse 8/1-6

The Master Builder- Montrose Playhouse, Bramford, Conn 8/2-6

Pygmalion-Oval in the Grove-Farmington, Conn 8/1-12

The Lesson & The Bald Soprano-Quadic Playhouse, Thompson, Conn 8/1-6

When We Dead Awaken- East End Players Theatre, Provincetown, Mass 8/1-4

Blue Denim-Dorset, Vt, Playhouse 8/3-6

The Deadly Game- Eagles Mere, Penn, Playhouse 8/2-5

Up in Mabel's Room-Green Hills Theatre, Reading, Penn 7/25-8/5.

The Milky Way- Garrett County Playhouse, Oakland, Md 8/1-5



London

A Far Country to be presented in fall by Hugh Beaumont ... Flora Pasquale Strikes Back a new musical by two NY authors, Howard Blankman and Paul Posner, to be presented in Oct by David Black-Willy Donaldson - Richard Walton prior to a NY try ... Wildest Dreams new musical by Julian Slade-Dorothy Reynolds opens Aug 3 at Vaudeville... The Kitchen closed at Royal Court after 29 performances.

US Repertory

Theatre Guild- American Repertory Co 13 week tour of Latin America opens Aug 7 at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. New company members include--Dran Seitz, Carlton Colyer, Richard Buck, George Kluge, Peg Shirley, William Smithers, Stanley Gilkey is new general manager of troupe.

Europe

West Side Story 14 day tour of Holland so successful the American musical will return to Amsterdam at Christmas ... The Legend, Swedish classic romantic comedy by Hjalmar Bergman will be presented in English at Alletearern, Stockholm Aug 1-15

Israel

Tevya and His Daughters directed by and starring Joseph Buloff is currently being presented at Habimah Theatre, Tel Aviv ... Michael Shillo will direct and star in Rashomon at Haifa Municipal Theatre in Sept.

Current Road Shows

Fiorello!-Geary, San Francisco 6/26

Flower Drum Song-Forrest Philadelphia 7/3

La Plume de Ma Tante-Alcazar, San Francisco 7/26

The Miracle Worker-Opera House, Central City 8/1



"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.

